a model legislation on agricultural marketing. The Committee is in the process of consulting the State Government/UT Administration for finalizing the Model Legislation.

Rationale for increasing the MSP

3171. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it has been propsed to fix a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy during 2003-04 at Rs. 550/- and Rs. 580/- for two grades;

(b) if so, what is the rationale behind Government's enhancing the MSP for paddy, wheat and sugarcane every year considering that FCI is holding huge unsold stocks of these commodities in its warehouses;

(c) whether a component of Special Drought Relief of Rs. 20/- per quintal is included in the MSP for 2003-04 as in the earlier years; and

(d) who is the beneficiary of this Special Drought Relief Fund—the farmer or Government, as with good monsoons no more drought conditions prevail in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Government has already fixed the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy—common and paddy grade 'A' at Rs. 550/- and Rs. 580/- per quintal respectively for 2003-04 season.

(b) The Government decides on the MSP of various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP), the views of the State Governments and Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which, in the opinion of the Government are important for fixation of support prices.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) does not procure sugarcane and hence there are no huge unsold stocks of sugarcane in its warehouses.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Production of Potato and Onion

3172. SHRI SURENDRA LATH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTUP be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made any evaluation of the production of potato and onion in the country during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the steps taken to increase the production of potato and onion; and

(d) the target set thereon for 2003-04?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government of India make assessment, from time to time, about production of potato and onion in the country.The production of potato and onion during 1999, 2000 to 2001 -02 is as under:

(in million tonnes)

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Potato	24.71	22.48	24.08
Onion	4.89	4.55	4.79

(c) and (d) The Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro-Management in Agriculture — Supplementation/ Complementation of States' efforts through Work Plan. Under the scheme the States have greater flexibility to pursue the programmes including on potato and onion as per their prioritized needs. Through this scheme, efforts are made to ensure the availability of quality seeds, to demonstrate technologies, training of farmers, dissemination of information etc. Besides, under the scheme of National Horticulture Board on "Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and Post Harvest Management' project based financial assistance is provided in the form of capital investment subsidy @ 20% of the total cost of the project with a maximum limit of Rs. 25 lakhs. Under the scheme growers of potato/ onion are eligible for taking up cultivation of these crops on commercial scale with improved technologies. Targets are not set for production of onion and potato.

Potential of Jharkhand for cultivation of medicinal plants/energy plantations

3173. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :